

Feb. 13, 2012

TO: House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Alex E. Friedlander
53 Tidy Island Boulevard
Bradenton, Florida 34210
941-792-9618
aefgen@aol.com

STATEMENT CONCERNING HEARING ON SOCIAL SECURITY'S DEATH RECORDS

The purpose of this statement is to register my strong opposition to the possible discontinuation of public access to the Social Security Death Index, which I understand is being considered by your committee as a means to reduce fraudulent use of deceased person's names in filing false income tax returns.

The Social Security Death Index is accessed by many different companies, non-profits and other entities besides individuals like myself who are researching their family history. Forensic specialists utilize the SSDI when reuniting remains of military veterans with their next-of-kin and descendants. Law offices, banks and insurance companies utilize the SSDI to resolve probate cases and to locate heirs. Organizations that help child survivors who were orphaned by the Holocaust to find family use the Social Security Death Index in locating relatives. The loss of this resource will be a major setback for the work of all these varied parties.

To penalize all the legitimate users of the SSDI in order to prevent the fraudulent use of the SSDI by a few persons is not the best way to solve the problem. One solution being proposed is to have the government itself use the SSDI to match against filings to check for false claims. Another would be to redact the Social Security numbers from this index. A different although less helpful solution for those who use this index legitimately would be to delay the addition of names to the index for a specified time period after the death of the individual.

I hope you will seriously consider my comments, and those of many others who are concerned with the possible loss of this valuable resource, and find better ways to solve the problem you have identified without restricting access to this important index.

Dr. Alex E. Friedlander